



## AN AYURVEDA AND MODERN REVIEW ON AMLAPITTA W.S.R. TO HYPERACIDITY

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### ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda* is one of the oldest health sciences. Human health is in decline due to faulty lifestyles, dietary patterns, mental stress, and strain. The changing lifestyle has led to a significant increase in disorders related to the gastrointestinal tract, known as *Mahasrotas*. *Amlapitta* is a significant disease affecting *the Mahasrotas*. It is a *pitta*-dominant disease associated with the digestive and excretory channels, known as *Annavaha srotas* and *Purishvaha srotas*. *Amlapitta* occurs due to weak digestive fire (*mandagni*) and undigested food (*Ama*) accumulation. When the acidic property (*Amla guna*) of *pitta* increases, it results in *Amlapitta*. Various *Acharya* described *Amlapitta* as a distinct disorder, but its pathogenesis (*Samprapti*) is mentioned in *Grahani dosha*. The fundamental principles of treatment include avoidance of causative factors (*Nidana parivarjana*), purification therapies (*Shodhana*), and palliative treatments (*Shamana chikitsa*). Specifically, emesis (*Vamana*) and purgation (*Virechana*) are recommended for the upward and downward movement of *doshas*, respectively<sup>(1)</sup>. In modern medical science, *Amlapitta* can be correlated with gastritis.

**Keywords:** *Amlapitta*, *nidana parivarjan*, *shodhana*, *shamana*, gastritis, hyperacidity.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, known as the science of life, focuses on physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. It adopts preventive and promotive approaches, as well as various curative methods, to treat diseases. Maintaining a balanced diet and regular exercise is crucial for good digestive health. However, in today's era, faulty dietary habits, sedentary lifestyles, and stress are prominent causative factors for diseases. The consumption of processed foods with preservatives and lack of exercise contribute to the dysfunction of the digestive channels, known as *Annavaha srotas*. *Amlapitta*, a disorder of the *Annavaha srotas*, exemplifies lifestyle disorders prevalent today. Approximately 25-30% of the population in India suffers from gastritis. *Madhukosa* described *Amlapitta* as “*Amlam vidagdham cha tat pitta Amlapittam*,” indicating a condition where pitta becomes vitiated, leading to the

acidity and fermentation of ingested food. The *Kashyapa Samhita* is the first text to explain *Amlapitta* as a distinct entity, and in *Madhavanidana*, the *Nidana Panchaka* of *Amlapitta* is described.

### DEFINITION:-

*Amlapitta* is derived from two words: “*Amla*” and “*Pitta*.” *Amla* is considered a natural property of *pitta*, along with *Katurasa* (pungent taste) <sup>(2)</sup>. According to Acharya *Susruta*, *Katu* is the original taste of *pitta*, and when *pitta* becomes *vidagdha* (fermented), it transforms into *Amla*. <sup>(3)</sup>

The condition where the acidic property (*Amla guna*) of *pitta* is augmented or increased is known as *Amlapitta*. <sup>(4)</sup> Thus, *pitta* that has acquired acidic properties and undergone fermentation (*vidagdhata*) is termed *Amlapitta*. <sup>(5)</sup>

### NIDANA:-

#### Dietary Causes (*Aharaj Nidana*)<sup>(6)</sup>

<i>Virudhasana</i> (Consuming incompatible foods )	<i>Ajirna</i> (eating when previous food is undigested )	<i>Ame Purnat</i> (overeating )
<i>Pishtanna</i> ( consuming flour-based foods )	<i>Ama Apakva Madya</i> (consuming un-fermented alcoholic beverages )	<i>Goras Atisevan</i> (excessive intake of dairy products ),
Guru Bhojan (heavy meals )	<i>Abhishyandi Bhojan</i> (sticky foods ),	<i>Ushnatisevan</i> (excessively hot foods )
<i>Snigdhatisevan</i> (overly oily foods )	<i>Rukshatisevan</i> (dry foods )	<i>Amlatisevan</i> (sour foods )
Drava atisevan (excessive liquids )	<i>Fanit Sevan</i> (consuming molasses ),	<i>Ikshu Vikar</i> (sugarcane products )

#### Lifestyle Causes (*Viharaj Nidana*):

Sleeping during the day after meals ( <i>Bhuktva Bhuktva Divaswapnat</i> )	excessive bathing ( <i>Ati Snana</i> )	prolonged immersion in water ( <i>Ati Avgahanat</i> )
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#### Mental Causes (*Mansik Nidana*):

According to Acharya Charak, even wholesome food taken in proper quantity may not be digested due to factors such as anxiety (*Chinta*), grief (*Shoka*), fear (*Bhaya*), anger (*Krodha*), an uncomfortable bed (*Asukha Shayya*), and staying awake at night (*Jagarana*). These factors can produce undigested food (*Ama*), which leads to *Amlapitta*. <sup>(7)</sup>

### SAMPRAPTI :

According to Acharya Kashyap, the *nidana sevana* causes *Doshprakopa*, especially *pitta dosha*. This eventually creates *mandagni*, due to which ingested food becomes *vidagdha* form and attains *shuktibhava*.

This *vidagdha* and *shuktibhava* of food creates *amlata* in *amashaya*. This condition is called *amlapitta*. ( k.s. 16/10-12)



### SAMPRAPTI GHATAK<sup>(8)</sup>

1. Dosh: Tridosha (mainly Pitta)
2. Dushya : Rasa, Rakta
3. Srotasa: Annavaha
4. Agni: Jatharagni
5. Udbhavasthana: Amashaya
6. Adhithana: Adhoamashaya
7. Swabhava: Chirkari

### GENERAL SYMPTOMS (SAMANYA LAKSHAN):<sup>(9)</sup>

- Indigestion (*Avipaka*),
- fatigue (*Klama*),
- nausea (*Utklesh*),
- bitter belching (*Tikta Udgar*),
- sour belching (*Amlaudgar*),
- heaviness (*Gaurav*),
- burning sensation in the chest (*Hrid Dah*),
- burning sensation in the throat (*Kanth Dah*),
- loss of appetite (*Aruchi*).

### Classification of Amlapitta:

#### 1. Madhavkara's Classification:<sup>(10)</sup>

A) According to the direction of flow (*Pravritti*):

- *Urdhvaga*

- *Adhoga*

B) According to the predominant *dosha*:<sup>(11)</sup>

- Predominantly *Vata* (*Vataja*)

- Predominantly *Vata* and *Kapha* (*Vata-Kaphaja*)

- Predominantly *Kapha* (*Kaphaja*)

#### 2. Kashyapa's Classification:<sup>(12)</sup>

- Predominantly *Vata* (*Vataja*)

- Predominantly *Pitta* (*Pittaja*)

- Predominantly *Kapha* (*Kaphaja*)

### MODERN VIEW:

The signs and symptoms of *Amlapitta* mentioned in Ayurvedic texts closely resemble those of hyperacidity. The stomach typically secretes acid essential for the digestive process, aiding in the breakdown of food. Hyperacidity occurs when the gastric glands of the stomach produce an excess amount of acid.

### DEFINITION:

Hyperacidity refers to an increased level of acid in the stomach. The stomach secretes hydrochloric acid (HCl), a digestive juice that breaks down food particles into their most minor form for digestion. Excessive hydrochloric acid in the stomach is a condition known as hyperacidity.

### CAUSES:

In the modern era, factors such as a fast-paced, hectic lifestyle, mental stress, incompatible food habits, and unhealthy regimens, including smoking and alcohol consumption, adversely affect digestion. Additionally, the use of certain medications like NSAIDs, steroids, and some vitamin supplements, along with insufficient sleep, irregular meal patterns, late-night eating, consumption of spicy, salty, and sour foods, and suppression of natural urges, contribute to gastric irritation and excessive gastric secretions, leading to the onset of hyperacidity (*Amlapitta*).

### SYMPTOMS OF HYPERACIDITY:

- Heartburn is a primary symptom characterised by a burning pain behind the sternum in the chest.
- Sour Belching: Regurgitation of acidic fluid with a taste of previously consumed food.
- Abdominal Discomfort: General stiffness and unease in the stomach.
- Restlessness: A feeling of discomfort and agitation.
- Nausea and Vomiting: Sensation of nausea accompanied by actual vomiting.
- Loss of Appetite: Reduced desire to eat.
- Indigestion: Difficulty in digesting food, leading to discomfort.
- Constipation: Difficulty in passing stools.
- Abdominal Bloating: Swelling or distension of the abdomen.
- Dark or Black Stools: Dark or black stools indicate possible internal bleeding.
- Dysphagia: Difficulty swallowing.
- Persistent Burping or Hiccups: Frequent burping or hiccups that are difficult to control.

#### **Complications of Hyperacidity:**

Peptic Ulcers: Prolonged hyperacidity can lead to ulcers in the stomach lining.

Ulcer Perforation: These ulcers can potentially cause severe complications such as perforation of the stomach wall.

#### **Management of Hyperacidity:**

- Weight Reduction: Achieving and maintaining a healthy body weight.
- Cessation of Smoking: Stopping cigarette smoking.
- Small Meal Portions: Consuming meals of smaller volume to reduce gastric acid production.

- Avoidance of Alcohol, Fatty Foods, and Caffeine: Eliminating these substances from the diet.
- No Evening Snacks: Avoiding food intake after the evening meal to prevent nocturnal acid regurgitation.
- Avoid Heavy Stooping or Bending: Preventing excessive bending or stooping, especially after meals.
- Head Elevation: Elevating the head of the bed by 15 cm to reduce acid reflux during sleep.

#### **Management of Amlapitta According to Ayurveda :**

##### *Nidana parivarjana*

##### *Samsodhana chikitsa*

##### *Shaman chikitsa*

1. **Nidan Parivarjana** (Avoidance of Causative Factors): Excessive exposure to causative factors (nidana) aggravates digestive fire (*mandagni*) and increases *pitta*, leading to *Amlapitta*. Thus, the first step in treatment is eliminating these causative factors. <sup>(13)</sup>
2. **Samsodhana Chikitsa** (Purification Therapies): *Acharya Kashyapa* notes that *Amlapitta* originates from the stomach (*Amashaya*) with *kapha* and *pitta doshas imbalances*. *Vamana* (emesis) and *Virechana* (purgation) are the recommended purification therapies analogous to cutting the root of a tree to prevent regrowth. <sup>(14)</sup>
3. **Shamana Chikitsa** (Palliative Therapy): According to *Acharya Kashyapa*, after the initial purification treatments (*Vamana* and *Virechana*), any remaining vitiated *doshas* should be managed with palliative measures such as restricted diets (*Langhana*), light meals (*Laghu Bhojana*), therapies based on time, place, and digestion (*Satmya Kala, Desh, Pachana*), and *Shamana Yoga* (balancing treatments).

#### **Oral medication :**

<b>CHURNA</b>	<b>RASA /VATI</b>	<b>ASAVA/ ARISTA</b>
<i>Avipattikara churna</i>	<i>Sutsekhar ras</i>	<i>Chandanasav</i>
<i>Shatavari</i>	<i>Kamadugha ras</i>	<i>Ushirasav</i>
<i>Yastimadhu</i>	<i>Laghusutshekar ras</i>	<i>Abhayarishta</i>
<i>Amla</i>	<i>Prawal panchamrit</i>	<i>Bhunimbadi kwath</i>
<i>Guduchi satwa</i>	<i>Maha Dhanvantari Gutika</i>	<i>Patoladi kashayam</i>
<i>Musta</i>		
<i>Sariva</i>		

### Pathya

Pathya Ahara	Pathya Vihara
<p>Grains and Pulses: <i>Puranasali</i> (cooked rice), <i>Mudga</i>(green gram), Masur(red lentils), <i>Harenuka</i> (cowpea).</p> <p>Dairy and Meats: <i>Goghrit</i> (cow ghee), <i>Godugdha</i> (cow’s milk), <i>Jangal Mansa</i> (game meat).</p> <p>Vegetables and Herbs: <i>Kalay Shak</i> (leafy greens), <i>Pautik</i> (seasonal vegetables), <i>Vasa Pushp</i> (flower of Vasa), <i>Vastuk</i> (root vegetables).</p> <p>Medicinal Herbs: <i>Rason</i> (garlic), <i>Haritaki</i>(Terminalia chebula), <i>Pippali</i>(Piper longum), <i>Puran Madira</i>(aged wine in moderation).</p>	<p><i>Vamana</i>(emesis), <i>Virechana</i> (purgation), <i>Basti</i> (enema).</p> <p>Cooling and Hydration: <i>Shital Jalpan</i> (consuming cool water).</p>

### Apathya (Contraindicated Diet and Lifestyle for Amlapitta):

Apathya Ahara	Apathya Vihara
<p>Foods to Avoid: <i>Til</i> (sesame seeds), <i>Urad</i> (black gram), <i>Kulthi</i> (horse gram).</p> <p>Fermented Foods: <i>Avi Dugdha</i> (fermented milk), <i>Dhanyamla</i> (fermented grains).</p> <p>Harmful Tastes: <i>Lavana</i> (salty), <i>Amla</i> (sour), <i>Katu Rasa</i> (pungent) substances.</p> <p>Heavy Foods and Alcohol: <i>Guru Anna</i> (heavy meals), <i>Dadhi</i> (yogurt), <i>Madya</i> (alcohol).</p>	<p>Lifestyle Practices to Avoid: <i>Vega Dharan</i> (suppressing natural urges), <i>Atap Sevan</i> (exposure to excessive heat), <i>Diwaswap</i> (daytime sleeping).</p>

## DISCUSSION

*Amlapitta* directly affects the *Annavaaha Srotas* (digestive channels). It is a psychosomatic disorder where psychological factors, alongside dietary indiscretions, significantly contribute to the condition. The principles of *Asta Ahara Vidhi Vishesayatana* and *Dashvidh Ahara Vidhi Vidhan* described in the *Charak Samhita* are crucial for both the prevention and treatment of health issues. These principles should be examined and followed during food intake to maintain health.

In the pathogenesis of *Amlapitta*, the normal function of *Amla Rasa* is primarily linked to the *Pitta Dosha*. Both *Amla Rasa* and *Amla Vipaka* are integral to the development of *Amlapitta*.

Symptoms of *Urdhva Gati Amlapitta* (upward movement) are associated with disturbances in the *Annavaaha Srotas*, while *Adho Gati Amlapitta* (downward movement) symptoms are related to disturbances in the *Purishvaha Srotas*. Given the prevalence and significance of *Amlapitta*, *Acharya Charak* provides a comprehensive explanation of the condition and its management strategies.

*Acharya Charak* notes that individuals residing in *Anup Desha* are particularly susceptible to *Amlapitta*, and this area is considered *Ahita Desha* (unfavourable environment).<sup>(15)</sup> *Acharya Kashyapa* advises that when all prescribed treatments fail, one should consider “Shifting the Place” to escape the adverse conditions contributing to the disease.<sup>(16)</sup>

## CONCLUSION

*Amlapitta* is a highly disruptive condition primarily caused by faulty lifestyle choices, dietary indiscretions, and mental stress. The clinical manifestation of *Amlapitta* necessitates the vitiation of *Pitta Dosha*, although the involvement of *Vata* and *Kapha Doshas* may also be present. If left untreated, *Amlapitta* can lead to various complications such as *Jwara* (fever), *Atisara* (diarrhoea), *Pandu* (anaemia), *Shoth*(oedema), *Aruchi* (loss of appetite), and *Bhrama* (dizziness).

The fundamental principles of treatment include *Nidan Parivarjana* (avoidance of causative factors), *Samsodhana* (purification therapies), and *Samsamana Chikitsa* (palliative treatments). Additionally, *Pathya Ahar* (beneficial diet) and *Pathya Vihar*(beneficial

lifestyle practices) are crucial for the effective management of *Amlapitta*.

By adhering to appropriate dietary practices, maintaining a balanced lifestyle, engaging in suitable exercise, managing desires, and upholding honesty, one can effectively manage and alleviate the symptoms of *Amlapitta*.

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